

The Ninth Service Command investigators, after study of uniforms of the WOWS, women drivers, and WADC, concluded that the public was undoubtedly taking all of them for Waacs, unless they investigated insignia and button design closely.³⁰

This was only the beginning of what seemed to be an attempt by every woman in America to get herself into a military uniform without the inconvenience of subjecting herself to WAAC discipline. Civilian clerical workers in many Army offices bought officers' "pink" skirts and olive-drab jackets with gold buttons. The Civil Air Patrol women were authorized by the AAF, without clearance from WAAC Headquarters, to wear WAAC uniforms with red braid and silver buttons. Even the WAAC "Hobby Hat" was not sacred; secretaries at Valley Forge Military Academy wore a close copy, with a uniform almost indistinguishable from a WAAC officer's. When WAAC authorities protested this to the academy, they were informed by the professor of military science and tactics that the uniform was not at all similar since the skirt had a pleat and the buttons had the academy crest and not the WAAC eagle. At Fort Devens a soldier's wife was found wearing a WAAC uniform with gold U.S. Army buttons and her husband's insignia; she said the uniform was one that "they sold in Philadelphia" to girls whose husbands were in the service.³¹

Eastern stores advertised a "junior WAAC uniform" in sizes up through 14, guaranteed to be "an exact copy of the real WAAC uniform." The Quartermaster General informed the Director that its sale was not illegal, although its wearing by an adult might be, depending on circumstances.³² A New York manufacturer supplied dress shops all over the country

with a uniform quite similar to the Waacs', advising them:

STAKE YOUR CLAIM. There is a vast new field open for you in selling to the army of Women Volunteer Workers—Air Raid Wardens—Minute Men—Canteen Workers—USO and scores of others. ALL DOING THEIR PART AND ALL WANTING TO DRESS THE PART.³³

It was doubly annoying to WAAC Headquarters that these concerns were able to get olive-drab and khaki cloth in the early months when The Quartermaster General was still unable to get it for WAAC uniforms.

These department store uniforms were bought and worn not only by volunteer workers but by scores of organized prostitutes in Eastern cities. Staff Director Jess Rice of the Third Service Command, working with the provost marshal, gathered and forwarded to WAAC Headquarters irrefutable evidence of this practice. The streetwalkers, known as Victory Girls, were discovered in Harrisburg, Newport News, Baltimore, and other cities, wearing uniforms of material and cut very similar to the WAAC's. One was apprehended by military police while trying to buy a furlough-rate railroad ticket. Another was discovered when authorities checked a report that a WAAC officer was drunk in a disreputable Harrisburg hotel. The proprietress of a Baltimore clothing

³⁰ Ltr, Dir WAAC to 9th SvC, 4 Jun 43, sub: Unauthorized Wearing of Uniform, and Ind. SPWA 250.1.

³¹ (1) Ltr, TAG to CG AAF, 10 Aug 43, sub: Authorization of WAAC Uniform for CAP Pers. SPWA 421. (2) Ltr, 4th SvC to 3d SvC, 26 May 43, sub: Valley Forge Mil Academy, Wayne, Pa., and Ind. SPWA 250.1 (4-3-43). (3) 1st Ind, WAAC Stf Dir to Dir WAAC, 11 Aug 43, to Memo, Chief of PM Br 3d SvC for Capt Rice, 11 Aug 43. SPWA 250.1 (4-3-43).

³² Ltr, WAAC Hq to Legal Div OQMG, 14 May 43, and Ind. SPWA 421.

³³ Photo adv, Evelyn Alden Fashions, 134 W. 37th St., New York, incl with Ind cited n. 31(3).